Evaluating Web Sites

**Directions:** Use the following checklist to determine Web sites that are appropriate to recommend to your students. Some items may need to be modified for different grade levels. Enter 2 points for a “yes” answer; 1 point for “partially”; and 0 points for “no.” Add up the points at the bottom of the screen.

35-44—Probably a good resource

20-34—Possibly a good resource, but look at information carefully

0-19—Probably not a good resource

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Web site** | 1920-30.com |
| **URL** | http://www.1920-30.com/prohibition/ |

| **Yes**  (enter “2”) | **Partially**  (enter “1”) | **No**  (enter “0”) |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Content** | | | |
| 2 |  |  | 1. Is the purpose of the Web site clear? What is it?   To inform readers what it was like to live in the 1920's using information taken largely from books and periodicals of the period. |
|  | 1 |  | 1. Is it clear who created the site? Is the organization or author that created the site credible? What or who it is the author?   It is clear who the author is (Robert Scott), but it is not clear how credible he is. |
| 2 |  |  | 1. Are affiliations that might create a built-in bias toward the information, such as a commercial, political, or social agenda easy to identify? What bias do you see?   none. |
|  |  |  | 1. If the answer to 3, is *partially* or *no*, does the site try to present information fairly and balanced, free from bias (through careful word choice, information from different viewpoints, etc.)? |
|  | 1 |  | 1. Does the site provide unique, useful information that is not widely available? |
| 2 |  |  | 1. Does the site provide research or credible sources to back up its information? Is information appropriately cited? |
|  |  | 0 | 1. Are the credentials of the authors provided, and if so, are they credible? |
|  |  | 0 | 1. Do reputable organizations link to this site? Using the Google search engine, type ***link:*** and the Web site address (example: link:www.website.com ). |
|  | 1 |  | 1. Is the content current and updated frequently? What is the most recent update?   January 2010 |
| 2 |  |  | 1. If there is advertising on the site, is it clearly differentiated from the informational content? |
| 2 |  |  | 1. Is the writing clear and engaging? |
| 2 |  |  | 1. Is the content appropriate for your students? Reading level? Abstract ideas? Mature topics? If there is some inappropriate content, what is it? |
| **12+** | **3+** |  | **Content Total Points =** 15 |
| **Organization and Navigation** | | | |
| 2 |  |  | 1. Does the home page accurately describe the purpose and contents of the site? |
|  | 1 |  | 1. Is moving around in the site easy? Can you always tell where you are and how to get back to the home page? |
| 2 |  |  | 1. Do the links work and do they take you where they say they will? |
|  |  | 0 | 1. Does the site have chats, message boards, or other interactive features that are useful and supportive of the site’s content? Are these features moderated? |
| **4+** | **1+** | 0 | **Organization and Navigation Total Points =** 5 |
| **Appearance** | | | |
|  | 1 |  | 1. Is the site attractive? |
| 2 |  |  | 1. Are graphics clear and do they add to the information being presented? |
|  |  | 0 | 1. Does the site have useful and appropriate video, audio, or word processing files to download, view, or hear? |
| **2+** | **1+** | 0 | **Appearance Total Points =** 3 |
| **Technical Performance** | | | |
| 2 |  |  | 1. Is the site reliable and does it load quickly? |
|  |  | 0 | 1. Does the site require additional plug-ins or software? Would students have easy access to that software? |
| 2 |  |  | 1. Are downloads quick and simple? |
| **4+** | **0+** | 0 | **Technical Performance Total Points =** 4 |
| **22+** | **5+** | 0 | **Overall Total Points =** 27 |

**Instruction**

1. At what point in the process of the project would this site be most useful?

At the beginning, as a fun way to introduce and bring the era to life.

1. Which 21st century skills, such as critical thinking or information literacy, will help your students use this site effectively and efficiently?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **21st Century Skill** | **When and How to Teach** |
| Information literacy  Iniative and Self direction | When: At the beginning of the unit, ask the students to gather information from the site in order to have a class discussion about society at the time prohibition was implemented. |
| Productivity and Accountability |  |
|  |  |